
***Beyond War and Toward Reconciliation:
Convening the Second Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable***

18-22 February 2024

Tokyo, Japan

Media Toolkit

Background:

Against a backdrop of myriad threats to our common home, the international community is plagued by a pervasive sense of insecurity, as reported by the United Nations, citing the highest number of ongoing violent conflicts since the Second World War. Simultaneous armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Colombia, Ethiopia, Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, Myanmar, and Ukraine stand as horrifying examples of the many threats.

Now, the urgent need for new and renewed approaches to peacebuilding, led by multi-religious organisations and diverse religious leaders, remains vital and clear. In this understanding, *Religions for Peace* launched the ***Beyond War and Toward Reconciliation: Multi-Religious Peace Roundtables***. These roundtables bring together multi-religious leaders experienced in serving diverse communities in times of both war and peace, alongside secular policymakers.

Key Focus Areas for the ***Multi-Religious Peace Roundtables*** include exploring new and innovative strategies to address the evolving landscape of conflict and insecurity, building on past successes while adapting to contemporary challenges, and showcasing instances where diverse religious communities collaborate for peace.

Global Humanitarian Needs are at record levels, with over 360 million people worldwide in need of assistance. Among them, over 110 million have been forcibly displaced due to persecution, violent conflict, or human rights violations. The “silent victims” - women, children, and marginalised peoples – are disproportionately deprived and impacted by gross human rights violations.

Addressing Global Challenges to peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights requires sustained collaboration across faiths, cultures, peoples, and sectors. In this context, all religious and faith traditions call upon their followers to work together for the common good of all people and the planet.

Collaborative Initiatives are crucial, emphasising the role of collaboration across faiths for the betterment of humanity and encouraging the involvement of policymakers and governmental entities in peace initiatives.

The inaugural convening of the first *Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable* in September 2022 created a ‘safe space’ for religious leaders from otherwise warring countries to inspire and support each other. The aim was to heal social divisions, redress trauma, and foster forgiveness and reconciliation for more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

Tokyo Peace Roundtable I:

In September 2022, the first *Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable* brought together diverse religious leaders and government representatives from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Russia, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine convened in person. Virtual participation included leaders sharing their experiences of humanitarian work from conflict zones supported by [Religions for Peace’s Multi-Religious Humanitarian Fund](#), spanning Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Thailand, and Ukraine.

The objectives of this groundbreaking *Multi-Religious Peace Roundtables* were threefold. Firstly, it sought to **identify and assess** the specific roles of faith leaders working together in war-torn and humanitarian contexts. Secondly, it aimed to **explore** the various strategies employed by multi-religious platforms, including [Religions for Peace Interreligious Councils](#), in reconciliation and rebuilding social cohesion efforts. Lastly, the *Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable* endeavored to **assess** the specific value-added of multi-religious humanitarian support provided in diverse contexts, drawing lessons from how such efforts contribute to the (re)building of socially cohesive environments.

Insights from the discussions revealed common challenges faced by faith leaders, including the difficulties in dealing with political dynamics and limitations within religious institutions that hinder the promotion of peaceful rhetoric. The dialogue also included a debate on whether reconciliation is possible amidst ongoing conflicts, emphasising the necessity of continuous dialogue for peace. The inaugural *Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable* concluded with a resounding call for continued dialogue and commitment among faith leaders to serve as peacemakers and bridge builders, recognising their responsibility to heal war-torn communities.

Tokyo Peace Roundtable II:

Building on the foundation and experience of the first *Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable*, *Religions for Peace* and *Religions for Peace Japan*, with the support of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), will convene diverse religious and faith leaders and actors, policymakers, and experts for the second [Beyond War and Toward Reconciliation: Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable](#) from 19-21 February 2024 in Tokyo, Japan. This *Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable* builds upon the impactful commitments forged during the inaugural *Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable*, including a steadfast dedication to initiating long-term reconciliation processes and preventing the recurrence of violent cycles. Moreover, it seeks to perpetuate the momentum of multi-religious peace dialogues, bringing together leaders from diverse faith traditions to share wisdom and foster cooperative efforts for peace. Central to this endeavor is the profound acknowledgment of the sanctity of human life, underlining the collective imperative to cultivate love for every individual.

The upcoming ***Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable*** is geared towards convening diverse religious and faith leaders, along with policymakers and experts. Anticipated outcomes of the second ***Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable*** include the establishment of a replicable and scalable platform for effective peacebuilding actions between multi-religious and secular leaders and policymakers. This ***Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable*** aims to enhance understanding regarding how multi-religious actions positively influence policymakers in their efforts to rebuild and reconstruct peaceful and inclusive societies. Integral to its goals is the strengthening of bonds of solidarity, engagement, and trust among diverse faith leaders, as well as between religious and secular policymakers and peacebuilders.

Expected participants of this ***Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable*** will include representatives from: Colombia, Haiti, India, Israel, Japan, Mali, Myanmar, Palestine, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Media Engagement Invitation and Privacy Considerations:

We extend a warm invitation to members of the press to join us virtually or in-person at the upcoming ***Multi-Religious Peace Roundtable*** in Tokyo, Japan on **19 February 2024 for the Opening Ceremony** and on **21 February 2024 for the Closing Ceremony and Press Conference**.

As this significant event brings together diverse religious leaders, policymakers, and experts, we recognize the value of media engagement in amplifying the dialogue for peace. To facilitate insightful coverage, we encourage journalists to set up interviews in advance with participants. It is important to note that some participants may have reservations about interviews or may prefer not to disclose their identities publicly. We kindly ask for your understanding and respect for the privacy of those individuals. Our priority is to create a conducive and inclusive environment for dialogue, and we appreciate your cooperation in navigating sensitivities surrounding public exposure.

For interview requests or further information, please contact **Ms. Sohaa Khan**, Media and Communications Specialist (*Religions for Peace*), at skhan@rfp.org or **Ms. Hiroyo Murayama**, Media and Communications Officer (*Religions for Peace Japan*), at h.murayama@wcrp.or.jp. For general inquiries, please email tokyopeaceroundtable@rfp.org.

We look forward to your valuable contribution in sharing the impactful stories and insights emerging from this important gathering.

For more information, please see the below links:

[Press Release for the First Tokyo Peace Roundtable \(2022\)](#)

[Report of the First Tokyo Peace Roundtable \(2022\)](#)

[Statement from the First Tokyo Peace Roundtable \(2022\)](#)

About the Organisers:

Religions for Peace

Founded in 1970, [Religions for Peace](#) is the world's oldest, largest, and most representative multi-religious movement, encompassing senior-most religious leaders to grassroots and community level leaders. Led by nearly 100 leaders from different faiths, representing an estimated 6.4 billion people in approximately 100 countries and 6 regions, Religions for Peace drives effective interfaith cooperation on global, regional, national, and local levels to advance peace for people and the planet.

What Sets Us Apart?

Religions for Peace operates through representative, multi-religious platforms known as [Interreligious Councils \(IRCs\)](#). Our IRCs are composed of both ordained and lay leaders representing diverse faith backgrounds. Through times of tranquility and crises, Religions for Peace IRCs collaborate with civil society organisations, fostering positive sustainable change on local, national, regional, and global scales.

The Power of Collaboration

We believe in the strength of unity and shared purpose. Religions for Peace unites all ethnic, religious, and faith leaders, institutions, and communities to deliver essential services and cultivate lasting collaborations for actions for the common good and sustainable development. Through concrete efforts and innovative programmes, we build trust and dismantle the root causes of crises and conflicts, fostering a world that thrives on care, compassion, and inclusivity.

A Proven Approach

With over 50 years of experience in diverse contexts, our approach has been tried, adjusted, and continues to adapt and improve. Religions for Peace has demonstrated that multi-religious actions for the common good are potent weapons against fanaticism, exclusion, and marginalisation, and are catalysts for peace, sustainability, and equity for all. Our approach proves more powerful than the efforts of individual religious leaders acting alone, more inclusive than endeavors stewarded solely by religious institutions, and more efficient and sustainable than ad hoc interfaith initiatives.

A Global Tapestry of Faith

Embracing diversity is our strength. Our [World Council \(Governing Board\)](#) comprises senior religious leaders from 60 countries, representing a wide array of religious communities, including Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous, Islam, Jain, Judaism, Sikh, Taoism, and Zoroastrianism. Together, they ignite the beacon of hope, lighting the way to a brighter future for humanity.

A Unified Future

In moments of crisis and challenge, the world seeks a guiding light. At the intersections of all faiths and Indigenous traditions, *Religions for Peace* stands strong, ready to lead the way to a future where unity reigns supreme, and the promise of peace is realised for people and the planet.

For more information, or to donate to support our mission, please visit our website:

www.rfp.org

Religions for Peace Japan

Religions for Peace (RfP) Japan was established in 1972 as a committee for the international issues supported by Japanese Association of Religious Organisations. We are comprised of delegates from Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and newer religious organisations who meet to discuss and practice cooperation for peace, public awareness activities and proposals, peace education and humanitarian contributions. We work together in the Peace Research Institute – whose members are scholars of varied religious backgrounds – as well as women’s and youth groups. It also has the support of those who belong to or appreciate the religious communities represented in its membership. Each of these groups is playing a distinct role in implementing the various projects and activities of *RfP Japan*.

Under the theme of “Caring for our Common Future: Advancing Shared Well-Being,” *RfP Japan* had developed its activities based on the action guidelines of promoting (1) network-building, (2) raising-awareness and advocacy, (3) peace education, and (4) humanitarian assistance. *RfP Japan* has utilised online and social networking services to conduct our action plans. We also set up 5 Task Force Teams, to (1) Stop Nuclear Dependence (2) Respond to Climate Crisis, (3) Promote Education for Reconciliation, (4) Prevent Trafficking in Persons, and (5) Provide Disaster Relief and those 5 task force teams played key roles to address those issues and implement action-oriented activities.

Network-Building

We take initiatives in network-building by participating in world assemblies of *Religions for Peace* and in assemblies of the Asian Conference of *Religions for Peace*, facilitating dialog on peace and stability in countries amid conflicts, building better understanding on multiple religions, and cooperating and collaborating with peace organisations in various sectors.

Raising- Awareness and Advocacy

We advocate for the reduction of armaments and the abolition of nuclear weapons, address issues related to nuclear power generation and energy supply, as well as environmental degradation and poverty, and produce urgent statements occasionally.

Peace Education

Task Force Team to Promote Education for Reconciliation leads peace education in *R/P* Japan by holding seminars to educate people who bring about reconciliation from grass root to international level by overcoming various confliction. The seminars offer conflict transformation methods, practice of dialogue with diverse communities, and learning opportunities about peace building activities by specialists including academics, NGOs and religious communities. Moreover, it puts high value on the problem-solving methods based on dialogue and the dignity of life and spirituality, not by violent or military power.

Humanitarian Assistance

We make immediate actions by providing humanitarian assistance (send out emergency fundraising calls and statements) and implement programs to support recovery to those affected by disasters around the world.

For more information, or to donate to support our mission, please visit our website:
www.wcrp.or.jp/en/.

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) is a United Nations entity that builds bridges between societies, promotes dialogue and understanding, and seeks to forge the collective political will required to accomplish these tasks. UNAOC works as a convener and facilitator to bring all sectors of society together to strengthen intercultural and interreligious dialogue to diminish hostility, and promote mutual respect and harmony among the people and cultures of the world. Led by Under-Secretary-General Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for UNAOC, the Alliance maintains a global network of partners, including states, international and regional organizations, civil society groups, foundations, and the private sector, to improve cross-cultural relations between diverse nations and communities. For more information, please visit www.unaoc.org.